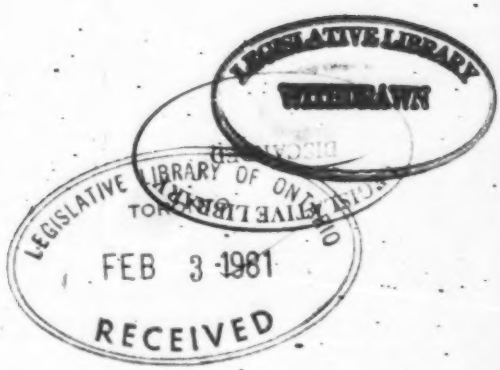
6721-0

GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK

PLAN OF ACTION

on

THE STATUS OF WOMEN



May 1980

RWDC

INTRODUCTION

The Government of New Brunswick endorses the three basic principles of the Government of Canada's National Plan of Action:

a. "All persons should enjoy equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities, without regard to differences of sex and marital status and these rights should be protected by law."

b. "Both women and men should have the opportunity to make free and informal choices about how they live. Therefore, neither laws nor society should impose sex-stereotyped roles on women or men."

c. There shall be no special treatment on the basis of sex, with the exception of measures relating to maternity."

The National Plan of Action also recommends a second exception within "c" above, specifically, "short-term measures to eliminate disadvantages suffered by women due to past discrimination".

In reference to this last exception, the Government of New Brunswick enacted Human Rights legislation in 1971, barring sex discrimination in employment, public services and publicity. Age and marital status were included in 1973. It is worth noting that Section 13 of the Human Rights Act provides the legislative capability for affirmative action programs, whenever these are considered advisable and necessary.

.../2

To ensure increased compliance with that legislation, the Premier of New Brunswick directed the formation of an "Equal Employment Opportunities Steering Committee", which is currently in the process of assessing past hiring and promotion practices of the provincial government with respect to women, and minority groups such as the handicapped and native people. As its starting point, that Committee is preparing a current "profile" of the provincial civil service. The findings and any subsequent recommended actions are expected to be the basis of future operating policies.

Against this background, the actions taken to date or planned for the mid-term future reflect the continuing commitment of the Government of New Brunswick to address concerns of women in areas of social and economic policy.

.../3

PLAN OF ACTION

PROTECTION, REGULATION, PREVENTION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Government of New Brunswick will:

1. Introduce a new Child and Family Services and Family Relations Act which will broaden legislative authority to provide protection services for adults and enable intervention in abuse situations irrespective of the presence of children, as is the case under the existing Child Welfare Act.

   Intervention could take any number of forms including, where children are involved, Court Orders which could direct that an offending person cease to reside with the family or remain there only under specified conditions. (Note: The Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on May 22, 1980.)

2. Evaluate, for future program expansion, the Fredericton-based Transition House and similar and/or related services. The Transition House was established as a demonstration project to offer emergency shelter, counselling, and support to women and children victims of intra-family violence.

3. Continue efforts towards interdepartmental cooperation in efficient retrieval of information on a province-wide basis pertaining to cases of intra-family violence, domestic disputes and sexual assault.

4. Study a more effective system of enforcement of maintenance orders and improve arrangements with other provinces respecting reciprocal enforcement of maintenance orders in jurisdictions other than those in which orders are issued.

5. Increase efforts, both interdepartmentally within New Brunswick and across jurisdictional boundaries, to facilitate the better enforcement of custody orders; such enforcement to include seizure of a child from a person not having legal custody for placement with the person granted custody, and court orders to restrain a person not having legal custody from contact with the child.

6. Examine, towards possible amendment, present legislation governing minimum age for marriage.

7. Consider the expansion of the Unified Family Court program throughout New Brunswick, and if desirable, consider also the availability of civil legal aid for domestic matters co-incidentally with the expansion of the Unified Family Court system.

8. Review training courses offered at the Atlantic Police Academy in Charlottetown, both recruit-level courses and in-service training courses, to ensure a better understanding and more sensitive treatment of cases of domestic violence, indecent assault and rape.

.../5

9. Cooperate in the distribution of the Advisory Council's brochure "Battered/Battue". The Government is in the process of producing a brochure on services to abused mothers and their children, and has discussed this brochure with the Advisory Council. Both brochures will be made available to the public in reception areas of Social Services offices across the Province.

FORMAL EDUCATION

The Government of New Brunswick will:

10. Adopt criteria for the assessment of sexism in school books and integrate as soon as practicable such criteria into the regular process of approval and revision of teaching materials.

11. Inform publishing companies that in future such criteria will be applied in the choice of teaching materials.

12. Implement gradually (beginning September 1980) a new program of studies for health and physical education including increased knowledge of the human body and its functions.

13. Strive to ensure that young women are given athletic opportunities equivalent to those offered to young men.

14. Promote the organization of junior high school industrial arts and home economics courses on a modular basis so that they may be selected, as facilities and staff permit, by both boys and girls (Grades VIII and IX).

15. Evaluate the feasibility of introducing legal education in the secondary school curriculum, including the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens.

16. Through the Deans' Advisory Committees of the Faculties of Education in the University of New Brunswick and l'Universite de Moncton, ask that consideration be given to the inclusion in teacher education programs a compulsory short course on non-sexist teaching methods; to consider offering such a course in evening and summer courses.

17. Through the Deans' Advisory Committees, ask universities to include in their programs for guidance counsellors information about the position of women in the labour force and about socio-economic factors which must be considered in career counselling of young women.

18. Encourage career guidance personnel to pursue the following objectives:

    a. give young men and women a better understanding of conditions that both face in today's world;

b. make certain young women fully explore their abilities, interests and all training opportunities in order to achieve financial independence;

c. bring young women to a more realistic and less biased perspective of their career choices.

HEALTH CARE

The Government of New Brunswick will:

19. Continue to enforce provincial legislation which permits authorization of medical or surgical treatment by an adult of either sex. (Individual physicians may at times request that both individuals give consent to sterilization procedures in order to ensure that they are aware of the nature and consequences of the procedure.)

20. Make efforts to have established a uniform medical protocol for the treatment of rape victims to be applied in all New Brunswick hospitals, and raise the matter with the N.B. Medical Society and the N.B. Bar Association, whose agreement and cooperation would be necessary prior to the establishment of such a protocol.

21. Continue to support initiatives which prevent undesired pregnancies and assist with desired ones, to decrease the need for abortions.

The Government has cooperated with the Regional Hospital Board in Edmundston, N.B., in the establishment of a family planning clinic, and the decision to establish similar clinics in other regional hospitals will be made by the individual Hospital Boards.

22. Continue its practice of providing an annual operating grant to the Planned Parenthood Association.

REHABILITATION

The Government of New Brunswick will:

23. Continue efforts to educate the general public about the problems of women alcoholics and drug dependents.

24. Continue efforts to educate women about the effects of alcohol and drugs on their own health as well as that of their unborn children.

25. Continue efforts to remove the stigma of alcoholism in women and foster positive attitudes which encourage alcoholic women to admit their problems and seek help.

26. Provide information, outreach and treatment services to women alcoholics and drug dependents.

27. Devise a component dealing specifically with women and alcoholism to be included in the prevention program of the Alcoholism and Drug Dependency Commission to be used throughout New Brunswick.

28. Hire staff for regional outreach programs for alcoholic and drug dependent women, covering all regions by 1981.

29. Provide separate units for women in existing detox centers and in any new facility, with the objective of providing services in all regions of the Province by 1982.

30. Offer rehabilitation services for women alcoholics and drug dependents in both official languages.

31. Study out-patient rehabilitation programs designed for chemically addicted women both in Canada and the United States in order to learn of other programs which could be adopted by New Brunswick.

Towards this series of rehabilitative efforts (23-31) the New Brunswick Alcoholism and Drug Dependency Commission hired a provincial coordinator in June, 1978 to devise, implement and oversee programs and services to women alcoholics and drug dependents in New Brunswick.

.../10

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

The Government of New Brunswick will:

32. Re-introduce the Employment Standards Code Bill, providing for a maternity leave of 17 weeks without pay, without loss of seniority or benefits. The same Bill will include provision for a Notice of Termination of Employment, requiring one week's notice of termination after six months' employment.

33. Take under advisement the report of the study currently being done by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women pertaining to equal pay for work of equal value.

34. Continue to ensure that training courses offered by the Training and Development Branch of Treasury Board are equally available to men and women.

35. Through the Federal-Provincial Manpower Needs Committee, continue to ensure that special training opportunities are made available for women re-entering the labour force.

36. Re-introduce the Matrimonial Property Act which will recognize marriage as, among other things, an economic partnership where legally married spouses share equally assets acquired during marriage and not to preclude contractual arrangements between common-law "marriage" partners to facilitate the same agreement.

37. Continue to work with day care centers to improve standards of operation and services. The Government will continue to regularly review day care subsidies in view of cost-of-living changes.

The new Child and Family Services and Family Relations Act will provide the Government with the authority to ensure that appropriate standards of service and qualifications of staff are maintained.

The Government of New Brunswick recognizes the legitimate concerns of the women of the Province, and the importance and significance of this Plan of Action to the realization of their aspirations. In that regard the Government pledges:

38. To continue consultations with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women in recognition of the need to foster and promote solutions to social and economic problems facing women in our changing society.